

JENISON HISTORY

April 2010

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www.jenisonhistory.org

JENISON HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION
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Our mission is to learn about Jenison history, obtain artifacts relating to its history, and maintain the Jenison Historical Museum as a place to share and display our heritage.

From the Archives

This month we are making a temporary break from Virginia's files and since our open house this month is dedicated to Cedar Crest Farms, we take some pages from the Lowing History Book.

STEPHEN AND HOLDEN LOWING

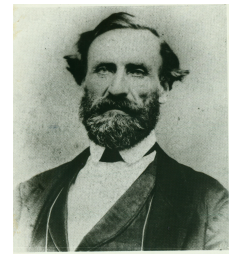
Stephen L. Lowing was born in East Gainesville, New York January 15, 1817. His family suffered many hardships in New York, he only went to school when he had clothes and shoes to wear. Their Uncle James, who had a large and profitable farm, tried to relieve some of the strain by taking Stephen to raise and educate. James was a very religious man, and realizing Stephen's aptitude for learning, decided that he should become a minister. He gave him pages of the Bible to memorize each day, while he worked in the fields. Uncle James was a hard taskmaster and tested him each evening. Although Stephen always remembered those lessons, he rebelled at the arbitrary manner of his uncle, so after four years, at the age of seventeen, he went back home. He found his brother James and his sister Mary with their feet wrapped in rags for warmth with the first money he earned he purchased shoes for them.

In 1836, at nineteen, having heard of the Michigan Land and Timber Bonanza, he walked to Grand Haven and found

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Lowing Cemetery, Bauer Rd and 28th Ave



Stephen Lowing

Lowing
History



STEPHEN AND HOLDEN LOWING (CON'T)

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employment at the sawmill of William Hathaway. The land on the south side of Grand River had been surveyed in 1831, and was ready to be sold for settlement or speculation. Stephen hired a canoe and paddled up the river, where he purchased 80 acres of land from Mr. Freeman Burton, directly opposite Sand Creek, thereby gaining a site bordering on the river.

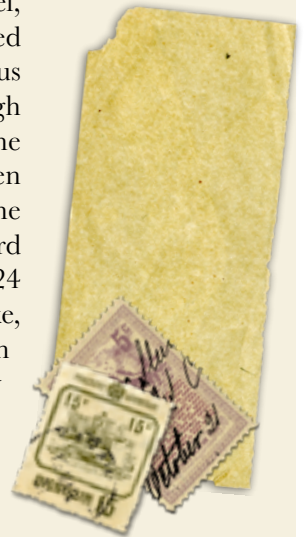
Early in 1837, he built a cabin on this land, and in the spring of 1838, he returned to New York State, where he attended Bethany Academy, preached in the Baptist Church, and married Ruth Madison (daughter of his Uncle James" second wife, Martha Madison). The first baby, Martha was born before his return to Michigan in September if 1841. His nineteen-year-old brother, Holden, accompanied him. They came by way of the Lakes and brought a team of oxen, their household goods, and their fanning and lumbering equipment with them. At Grand Haven, they transferred their goods to the Grand River steamer "Humming-Bird", which landed them at Sand Creek.

It was a rugged country; the Indian trails and the river were the only highways of the area. The first years in Michigan were difficult ones. The mosquitoes and flies were troublesome in the summer, and Stephen had brought little for comfort in the winter, Ruth was continuously ill with ague and there were many days when there was little to eat.

Stephen's father arrived in 1842, and the rest of the family October 1843; Two more children were born to Stephen and Ruth; Luke, (October 1843); and Oscar (Tube) December 1847. Ruth returned to New York State to visit her family, but continued illness kept her from returning to the unhealthy Michigan climate, she never returned.

Stephen lumbered and drew his logs to the river hoping to earn money by selling them in Grand Haven, but in the 1840's logs barely brought in enough money to pay expenses (usually not more than \$5.00 per M., and often less). Hoping to sell boards to the settlers for their cabins, he dammed up a creek near his hut, and put in a water wheel, to which was attached pails. These were filled from the race at the top and made an impetus that turned the wheel and made enough power to run the saw. It was crude. The millpond emptied too rapidly, but Stephen and his neighbors used it until 1846, when he built a larger mill. In 1850, he built his third mill, which sawed about 6000 feet in 24 hours, having an 8 inch bore, 26 inch stroke, and a boiler about 16 feet by 36 inches in diameter, with a 13 inch flue. For many years he did an extensive lumber business. At this time, Stephen had thirty or forty men working for him, so he built a lumber camp near the river consisting of a boarding house, a store, in which he installed a Post Office, a jail, several cabins, and a large building that had so many projections, that the lumbermen dubbed it the "Bee Hive". Stephen was the first Post Master in Georgetown, serving from 1850 to 1854, when the Post Office was moved to the home of E.F. Bosworth. Stephen held many offices in the Township; Clerk, Justice of the Peace, and Supervisor for several years. He became a petty-fogger and settled many cases for the community.

Stephen was instrumental in the organization of Company I in 1861 comprised of his friends and neighbors from Georgetown. They joined with the Michigan Third Regiment at Grand Rapids, and merged into the Union Army of the Potomac upon their arrival in Washington, DC. He became Captain of Company. 1, October 1861, and



STEPHEN AND HOLDEN LOWING (CON'T)

Judge Advocate of the 3rd Regiment. He was wounded at Fair Oaks, May 1862. After hospitalization in Washington he returned to Georgetown for further recuperation.

While still crippled he was sent to the Detroit Barracks, in October 1862, to try cases against the "Bounty Jumpers" trying to escape to Canada. He returned to active duty July 1863, and continued as Captain and Judge Advocate, but trouble from his wound forced him to resign. He was honorably discharged April 1864.

After his return to Georgetown, the demands from the soldiers seeking assistance on their war claims persuaded him to intensify his study of law, and in 1866, he was admitted to the bar. He became the Prosecuting Attorney of Ottawa County in 1868, and moved to Grand Haven. Here he married Emily Markham in 1870, and had two children: Myrtie born 1873 and Emily born 1875.

He continued his practice at Grand Haven until January 1884 when owing to deafness, he gave up his office, resigned from the law, and moved to his farm in Allendale. In 1889, while farming he was attacked by a bull and from these wounds never fully recovered.

Stephen died November 7, 1891. Funeral services were held in the Canada Hill School House, and he was buried in Georgetown

Cemetery. His pallbearers were his associates at the bar.

HOLDEN C. LOWING, was the fourth child and the fourth son born to Isaac and Lavina Lowing. He was born March 1821, in East Bloomfield, New York. He attended school between the ages of 5 and 10 and only intermittently thereafter. As soon as he was old enough, he worked for other farmers and brought much of his pay home to assist in clothing and feeding the younger children.

When Holden was fourteen, the Michigan Land and Timber craze hit New York. Everyone talked about the wealth in timber in Michigan, almost all to be had for the asking. Holden was too young to take advantage of this, as his older brother Stephen had. After the glowing reports given by Stephen, the family looked forward to the time they, too, could move to Michigan.

It took 4 years for the money to be raised for purchase of land in Michigan. In the late fall of 1841, Holden, at the age of 20, arrived with his brother Stephen, Stephen's wife and six month old baby, to Michigan. It was a long tiresome trip with such a small baby, and to make things worse, on the last night, such a storm arose that even the crew were sick. The oxen were so sick that Holden thought they would die.

When they reached Grand Haven, they transferred all their supplies to a steamboat and came up Grand River to Sand Creek. From there it was a short walk to the hut that Stephen had built.

For a few weeks, Holden lived with Stephen, but in the early winter of 1841, he purchased 80 acres of land for his father on what is now known as the Bauer Road near the intersection of 24th St., about a mile south of Stephen's property. He then finished the winter by working in a lumber camp. In the summer of 1842, he became an assistant to a surveyor, and spent the next few summers surveying land all over South Georgetown, North Jamestown Townships, and as far away as Big Rapids.

This same spring of 1842, his father, then 48 years old, arrived in Michigan, ready to start over, clearing land for another home in the wilds. Holden also helped his father, cut timber and clear the land. They built their cabin large enough to accommodate all the family that was to arrive the next year.

Holden purchased land west of his father's place around this time, and continued to add more land as time went by.

Georgetown was organized as a Township in 1839. In April 1840 seven men met at Jenison and held the first Township meeting. They elected Hiram Jenison as the first

STEPHEN AND HOLDEN LOWING (CON'T)

Supervisor and H. Burton as Clerk. In 1841 these same men were again elected, but in 1842 and 1843, Holden was elected Clerk with H. Jenison still Supervisor. At that time Holden was only 21 years of age. In 1862 and 1863 he was again Clerk and in 1864, Supervisor.

At the very first, mail for Georgetown was sent to Grandville, where anyone from Georgetown called for it, and delivered it to the neighbors. Later people in the township were allowed to have the post office in their homes or mills. The first post office was in the mill boarding house of his brother as early as 1850, where it remained until 1854. After that it was placed either in the home of Holden, who was a Democrat, or Franklin E. Bosworth, who was a Republican, depending on which party held sway in Washington.

Off and on during his life Holden was a member of the school board and when the Grange was organized in Georgetown, he was very active in the movement and the first Master. He was also a charter member of the Jenison Masonic Lodge.

In September 1851, he was married to Eleanor Chapin Woodruff, born August 1835 in Springfield, New Jersey. They had 13 children. Every one of them lived to manhood and womanhood..

Soon after his marriage, he built a large two-story house on his property. It contained 17 rooms, with a hall running the full length of the upstairs with bedrooms on either side and stairways at both ends. There was a cupola on the roof with shutters. The home became a gathering place for young people for miles around. Surging was one of the main pastimes; music was furnished by an organ, comb, Jew's Harp, bones, and mouth organ. It was said that Holden loved young people and if one of the young people missed one week, he was told that Holden had missed him.

Holden died on his farm in March 1899 at the age of 79. His death certificate reads Holden E. Lowing. Eleanor died Sept 1907. Both are buried in the Georgetown Cemetery. The outstanding accomplishment of Holden's life is the fact that he secured enough land to give everyone of his children a small farm as a start in life. The Cedar Crest Farm which is the theme of the Jenison Historical Open House this month, was built on this land by Roy Lowing (grandson to Holden), and his son's. Upon his retirement his son's Wayne managed the barn and cattle and Hugh managed the dairy until their retirements.

QUARREL OVER A ROAD

At one time Holden Lowing wished to extend the logging road, leading

directly north from Hudsonville, across his land, and asked permission of Stephen to have it cross his land, thereby making a straight road from Hudsonville, north to the Ohio Mill's Docks on Grand River.

One would have thought that this would have been a sensible and convenient road for Stephen, but he refused. Holden was angry and years later, when Stephen wished this road to go through, and began the proper procedure to accomplish this, but Holden was Supervisor of Georgetown Township at this time and decided Stephen was not to have this road if he could prevent it. Holden, knowing that a road cannot disturb a cemetery, had the southern most part of his land set off as a cemetery and buried one of the poor charges of the Township in this lot. As this was the southern entrance to the proposed road, Stephen never gained his road. For years that lonely grave was the only one in the cemetery.

Later, Stephen and Holden's parents, Isaac and Lavina were buried in this cemetery. Today that same Cemetery remains as a memoriam of that quarrel.

Are you a JHA Member?

If not, dues are currently only \$10, see a board member to join and be a part of Jenison History

APRIL OPEN HOUSE

CEDAR CREST FARMS

SATURDAY, APRIL 17

2-4 PM

Donations are appreciated to help maintain
the Tiffany House Museum, Jenison

FOR SALE AT THE MUSEUM

‘Bend in the River’ Book
Mill Prints and stationary

Available during any open house, or call the Museum at
457-4398

Volunteer Opportunities!!

Museum Cleaning: This is a big job, as you can well imagine, that needs constant attention in order to have the museum look it's best during the open houses. Contact any board member if you can lend a few hours.

Tour Guides: The school tours are a great way of teaching the children about our history and is such a rewarding experience. You won't regret being a part of this experience for our local children. Joyce Klawiter would love to hear from you.

Community Displays: An initiative is to get some displays out into the community, possible to local banks,

schools and businesses. What better way to get awareness out into the community than to bring the museum to them. Grayce Lancaster is heading up this project. She would welcome any help you might be able to offer from finding the locations to picking display material and setting up the displays.

And the list goes on... Monthly Open Houses, Theme's for Open Houses, Inventory, Museum Maintenance, board trustee.

You can come to a monthly meeting or reach out to any board member if you would like to volunteer in any particular area.

JHA TRUSTEE'S

Chair

Liz Timmer (10)

Vice Chair/Co-Historian

Ken Williams (11)

Treasurer/Editor

Ruth Lowing (11)

Social Secretary

Nellie DeLaat (10)

Recording Secretary

Bev Potter (10)

Tours/Co-Archivist

Joyce Klawiter (12)

Co-Archivist

Barb Semeyn (11)

Displays/Curator

Grayce Lancaster (12)

Maintenance/Co-Historian

Mike Timmer

Trustee

Anne Foote (11)

Township Rep

Del South

(##) = year of re-election to the board

Contact Information: To reach any board member, leave a message at 457-4398.

Historical Society of Michigan

Find us on the registry at:

www.hsmichigan.org

TREASURERS REPORT AND
MINUTES AVAILABLE TO
MEMBERS UPON REQUEST



Jenison Historical Association
PO Box 664
Jenison, MI 49429

2010 Meeting Schedule

Thursday, April 15 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, May 20 - Rosewood Reformed Church
Thursday, June 17 - Rosewood Reformed Church
Thursday, July 15 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, August 19 - Georgetown Library
Thursday September 16 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, October 21 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, November 18 - Georgetown Library

No Meeting in December, 2010

All meetings start at 6:45 PM unless noted

2010 Museum Open House Schedule and Themes

April 17	2-4 PM	Cedar Crest Dairy
May 15	2-4 PM	Jenison Then and Now
July 17	2-4 PM	Haires Landing/Cemetery
September 18	2-4 PM	Coffee at Tiffany's
October 16	2-4 PM	From Trees to Subdivision
December 4	1-4 PM	Holiday Open House